

### **Optimism as a Way of Life**

Here is a challenge: whenever you are knocked down by a setback or fall short of your expectations, think “I’m going to take what my mistakes taught me and spring back onto my feet. I will do better the second time around.” Or when an opportunity to do something you have never tried is within reach, grab it without hesitation. Not that simple? Scared to take a leap of faith? This is where optimism, which I believe should become a way of life, comes in and helps!

Optimism is what I call a life-saver. Without it, I would have drowned in the sea of disappointments, ugly confrontations, sticky situations and nail-biting days. Without it, I would have hardened into a cynic and be ranting about anything that does not go my way. Without it, I would probably have given a whole new definition to the term “ice princess”. In short, no matter how many surprises life hurls at me, optimism always puts things into perspective and drives me to keep moving forward with enthusiasm and confidence.

The best thing about optimism? It makes you believe in the possibility of good things happening even when adversity is staring right into your face. Be it a test, an audition or taking up something new. Optimism, coupled with hard work and passion, is what I believe the weapon to brandish when battling failure. Curiously, in my current school environment, optimists are quite rare. The phenomenon of students forever doubting their academic abilities, especially predicting the worst possible outcome after every assessment, is inexplicable. It is as if they do not dare to hope otherwise! I sat and watched a friend yell “Serious? I actually got full marks for this Math quiz?” for years before she finally exhaled and accepted that she had this capability. Some are such incredible pessimists that they view optimism as self-delusion. How can that be? Positivity enables us to search for solutions with renewed vigour and persistence. Is it so hard to believe that impressive results can be produced amidst turbulent times? After all, you get what you give. The more effort you put in, the more benefits you reap. Optimism pushes me to do just that because I know I can achieve greater things.

Other than achieving greater things, optimism shoves you right out of your limits. I got a taste of that once at a leadership training camp. I had to go down a zip-line whereby I was physically attached to a pulley system and expected to slide to the ground from a four-storey tall platform. Dangling my feet off the platform, fear replaced rationality. “I can do it!” became “I am going to die!” After fifteen minutes of staring down at the vast green underneath my feet, I finally snapped out of my trance and attempted to let optimism take over. Why dwell on the fear when I had to overcome it anyway? I flew down, all the while clinging on for dear life. I grew braver that day.

Optimism spices up life, this I believe. It’s a beautiful day, don’t let it get away.